



A publication of the Asthma Initiative of Michigan - Winter 2010

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Flu Season Isn't Over by Dr. Gregory Holzman

2009 H1N1 (sometimes called "swine flu") is a new influenza virus causing illness in people around the world. This new virus was first discovered in the U.S. population in April 2009, and did not go away entirely this summer before a larger wave peaked in the fall. Flu outbreaks often come in waves, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, emphasizing the unpredictable nature of pandemics, is urging Americans to continue to get vaccinated.

Though most cases are mild, about 70 percent of people who have been hospitalized with this 2009 H1N1 virus have had one or more medical conditions that put them at "high risk" of serious complications. This includes pregnancy, diabetes, heart disease, asthma and kidney disease. Young children, especially those less than four years of age, are also at higher risk of serious complications from 2009 H1N1, just as they are from seasonal flu. Sixty-four people have died from this virus in Michigan since September 1st, and 6 (9.4%) were known to have asthma.

Though hospitalizations and deaths from 2009 H1N1 have declined, there are four more months of flu season to go. Right now there is a window of opportunity to get vaccinated before another possible wave arrives. This is the first time that a vaccine has been available to combat an active pandemic. More than 3 million doses of the vaccine have been allocated to Michigan and are available through participating doctors' offices, local public health, and even some retail pharmacies.

All residents are now eligible for the vaccine, and health officials encourage everyone to get vaccinated --- it is the best way to prevent the flu. The more people who are immune the less likely the virus will spread through our communities. Health officials continue to strongly encourage high risk groups, including pregnant women, people who live with or care for children less than 6 months of age, all people 6 months to 24 years, and people 25 to 64 years with chronic medical conditions, to get vaccinated.



The seasonal flu could also begin soon. Like 2009 H1N1, the seasonal flu can affect people with asthma more severely, so it is important that they talk with their doctor about ways to prevent it, including vaccination. Fewer than 2 in 5 adults by mid November 2009 with asthma had received the seasonal flu vaccine. However, it is not too late to get vaccinated as the seasonal flu often peaks in February or March in Michigan.

Remember, people with asthma can have severe complications with either flu, and should know what to do if asthma symptoms get worse for any reason. Look for local vaccinations sites and times by visiting your local health department website or by using the [Google flu shot](#)

[locator](#). Also, do not forget to keep up good hygiene habits like washing your hands often, covering your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing, and staying home from work or school when sick.

Gregory Holzman, MD, MPH is Chief Medical Executive at the Michigan Department of Community Health.



Quick Links

[AIM Website - GetAsthmaHelp.org](#)

[AIM Partnership Forum - Nov. 2009](#)

[MDCH H1N1 Flu Info](#)

[Google Flu Shot Locator](#)

[AIM Event Calendar](#)

AIM Partnership Forum

The Asthma Initiative of Michigan held its first biannual Partnership Forum on November 10, 2009 at the Lansing Community College West Campus. The AIM Partnership Forum is a meeting held twice a year for individuals and representatives of organizations committed to reducing Michigan's asthma burden. The Forum provides opportunities to link state and local level partners, promote awareness of asthma-friendly policies, and spread best-practice findings through presentations, updates and networking. Sixty-four asthma champions attended the November 10th Forum. Presentations that day included:

- **Community Program Sustainability** - Shelli Bischoff-Turner talked about using improved program identity, capacity and care of constituents to achieve results towards mission.
- **H1N1** - Dr. Gregory Holzman discussed H1N1, flu vaccinations, and addressed concerns specific to asthma.
- **Practice Transformation** - Rose Steiner told the group about the Improving Performance in Practice program, and how it uses auto industry coaches to help primary care practices improve care for their patients with chronic diseases.
- **Asthma Self-management in Older Adults** - Dr. Alan Baptist shared information about a new asthma self-management program currently being developed at the University of Michigan.
- **Work-related Asthma** - Dr. Ken Rosenman presented information about work-related asthma, including a case study which outlined opportunities for intervention.

The GetAsthmaHelp website now provides [PDFs for all of these presentations](#).

The next Forum will be held May 26, 2010 at Lansing Community College West Campus. For more information regarding the Forum please contact [John Dowling](#), phone 517.335.9713.

Michigan Asthma Calendar

February

26- March 2 AAAAI Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA. [Click for more info](#)

March

10 Asthma 123 Facilitator Training, American Lung Assoc. of Mich. office, Oak Park, 1 to 4 p.m. For more info: [Patty Inman](#), 810.953.3951

17 Integrated Pest Management conference, Genesee Intermediate School District, Flint, 1 to 3 p.m. For more info: [Jan Roberts](#), 810.257.9591



Please direct questions and comments about this newsletter to
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